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ABSTRACT

This examination of the treatment given to peace and security issues in American social studies textbooks begins by summarizing the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Curriculum Guidelines and a 1983 study of high school social studies topic priorities. Following a review of past textbook studies and a brief discussion of textbook treatment of foreign policy, the paper uses four major topics (propaganda, U.S./Latin American relations, the war in Vietnam, and nuclear war) to illustrate problems found in textbooks related to peace and security issues. In an examination of 45 textbooks, grades 8-12, the overall treatment of propaganda was rated very good considering the influence of nationalism. However, the topic tended to be ignored after World War II coverage. Overall textbook coverage of U.S./Latin American relations was rated as poor, although nearly all texts offered some criticism of U.S. policies. Moreover, the perspective of Latin countries was given little mention, and the cultures of the region were ignored. Similarly, in an analysis of coverage of the Vietnam war, only 1 of the 10 textbooks reviewed provided any background about Vietnamese cultural settings, with most focusing primarily on political and military aspects of the war. Additionally, the author reports very slight coverage of nuclear war issues in comparison with other topics in his review of 19 U.S. history textbooks. The paper concludes with recommendations for achieving goals stated in NCSS curriculum guidelines. (LH)

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THE TREATMENT OF PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS IN THE UNITED STATES

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The news media constantly reminds us of the fragile nature of global peace and security. Whether we view on television mutilated bodies in Lebanon, starving children in Bangladesh or the victims of terrorist bomb attacks in Paris, we know that the global village in which we live is indeed in dire need of greater peace and security. Is there a role for social studies educators in making a contribution to achieving global peace? This paper will examine one area where concrete progress can be made.

The View of Social Studies Educators Social studies educators in the United States support the teaching of peace and security issues in the social studies curriculum. The National Council for the Social Studies, a leading organization of social studies educators, in its 1979 Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines called for "social participation in a democracy" devoted toward the "resolution of problems confronting society."[1] The Guidelines maintain a social studies program should "emphasize pervasive and enduring social issues" and should include "analysis and attempts to formulate potential resolutions of present and controversial global problems. "These problems include the use and allocation of world resources" and "nuclear proliferation." These Guidelines clearly show the intent of the leaders of social studies education for world peace and security issues to be given an important place in the social studies curriculum.

The Role of Textbooks A well known study of social studies in the United States, Project Span, 1980, reported that the textbook was the main tool of instruction for the social studies teacher.[2] We can then assume textbooks are an important source to examine to determine what views and knowledge students may acquire concerning United States foreign policy and relations with other nations.

One critical view concerning the treatment by social studies textbooks of American foreign affairs in the world is that of Frances FitzGerald, author of the controversial study, America Revised:

> An American child who will grow up to work for General Motors, the City of New York, or a large wheat farm, say, will find United States history just about as useful as the history of Saxony would have been to a Saxon soldier going off to fight in the Napoleonic wars.[3]

Is the FitzGerald indictment valid? Does it apply to all social studies textbooks or merely those in United States history? Are some books better than others? These and related questions will be reviewed in this paper.

Teacher Views Before going further, let us review a 1983 study of the priorities of ninety high school social studies teachers in Virginia as to what major global issues they thought needed to be studied in the curriculum, where these topics could best be taught and whether they are now being taught.[4] The results of this survey found strong support for the teaching of peace and security issues including "increasing militarism," "nuclear proliferation," and "world resource allocation." The best place to study "increasing militarism" was the eleventh grade United States history course. For "nuclear proliferation," the first choice for placement was in American government, grade twelve; and finally, "world resource allocation" was thought best taught in ninth grade world geography. Of the issues surveyed, those given highest priority for inclusion by the teachers were: "economic growth, inflation, unemployment, recession," "increasing militarism, limited wars," and third, "nuclear proliferation." Not surprisingly, the teachers gave high priority to the teaching of most of the issues, but when asked how much these are now being taught, the actuality fell considerably short of the teacher expectations.
The chart below shows where the social studies teachers thought that global issues should be studied in the social studies curriculum. From these figures certain responsibilities are designated. Population growth and hunger/poverty, for example, are highly recommended as topics in the world geography course. The topic of nuclear proliferation was not as open to an exact placement except it was determined not to be a topic for world geography.

Shown below are the courses where high school teachers believe the issues should be taught.

Issues	Wo. Geog.	Wo. Hist.	U.S. Hist.	U.S. Gov't.
Ecological Imbalance/ Environmental Concerns	70%	23%	31%	50%
World Resource Allocation	82%	35%	26%	38%
Population Growth	76%	46%	40%	47%
Hunger/Poverty	74%	46%	41%	48%
Nuclear Proliferation	31%	60%	68%	71%
Global Human Rights	57%	76%	36%	52%
Increasing Militarism, Revolution, and Limited Wars	31%	22%	78%	68%
Racism	35%	46%	78%	63%

Past Studies of Textbooks The content analyses of textbooks as a source of information concerning national views of peace and security issues goes back many years. In 1899 textbook analyses were conducted in the International Peace Conference to eradicate false ideas about the reasons for war. In 1953, UNESCO supported textbook evaluations urging "...member states to make bilateral agreements concerning textbooks." Within three years, UNESCO published the Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials, in which criteria for analysis and the revision of textbooks were proposed. These criteria included accuracy, fairness, balance, world-mindedness, and comprehensiveness.[5]

In the 1960's, an Anglo-American team, initiated by historical associations in both England and the United States, researched American and British texts and found numerous differences and deficiencies in them. They concluded that bias had taken a more subtle form:

> Nationalistic bias as it persists today is in a more dangerous form than the monstrous distortions of a past generation.... It is more subtle, more persuasive, and far less easy to detect, partly because it often mirrors subconscious prejudices of which the textbook author himself is unaware.[6]

More recently, textbook analysis has involved scholars from the United States and other nations coming together to examine social studies textbooks used in each county. Included in these studies have been the U.S./U.S.S.R. Textbook Study Project,[7] the Japan/U.S. Study Project,[8] both dealing with public school textbooks and at the college level the SIUC-USICA German-American History Textbook Project completed in 1982.[9]

Education, Textbooks and Foreign Policy In a book published by the Foreign Policy Association, Ralph Levering states:

> Viewed historically, the four most important influences on public perceptions of American foreign policy in the twentieth century, specific events aside, have been quantity and quality of education, patterns of media usage, ethnic affiliation, and party affiliation.[10]

Levering goes on to assert, "despite their weaknesses the media have been the most important link between officials and the public in the formulation of American foreign policy." Strong disagreement exists over what role education plays in the political international socialization of students and their views of the world. Certainly education plays a role along with other forces including the family, peers, the church and as Levering states, the mass media. Assuming the primary tool of the classroom for social studies teachers is the textbook, we will focus on this media source to give us some indication as to what students are exposed that may influence their views concerning peace and security issues. We must be mindful however that textbooks are only a small part of the variety of media that daily bombard students related to foreign affairs. An important point we must also keep in mind is a serious problem facing the authors and publishers of social studies textbooks.

Henry Steele Commager, a noted American historian describes this problem:

> There is one bias, one prejudice, one obsession so pervasive and so powerful that it deserves special consideration: nationalism. History, which should be the most cosmopolitan of studies, most catholic in its sympathies, most ecumenical in its interests, has in the past century and a half become an instrument of nationalism. Nationalism is, no doubt, the most powerful source in modern history, and it is hardly surprising that it should have captured historiography and enslaved historians.[11]

Many topics related to world peace and security could be explored but this paper will focus on four including propaganda in textbooks, nuclear war, the War in Vietnam and United States/Latin American relations. Each of these examples illustrate problems found in textbooks related to peace and security issues and in turn points of weaknesses as related to the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines cited earlier. Because Levering gave such significance to mass media as an influence upon American views of world affairs, we will first examine how propaganda is presented in United States social studies textbooks.

Propaganda in Social Studies Textbooks Does the influence of nationalism cause social studies textbooks to ignore the role propaganda plays in their country's history, past and present? To answer this question forty-five textbooks, grades eight through twelve were examined to see how propaganda, both as a content topic and as skill was treated.

The United States history books generally devoted the most attention to propaganda along with two of the United States government books. Propaganda and war went hand to hand in most of the history textbooks. First, leading propagandists of the American Revolution such as Samuel Adams and Thomas Paine were featured. The textbooks often presented examples of propaganda such as biased accounts of the Boston massacre. Students were also to examine sources to see if they could detect propaganda techniques and bias.

Other points where propaganda was given good coverage was the role of the press in causing the Spanish-American War and the role of the United States government in mobilizing public opinion against the Germans during World War I. The greatest focus given to propaganda is during World War I and included the unfortunate results producing waves of anti-German sentiment throughout the United States. Hundreds of Americans were jailed under the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 for opposing the war. German products were renamed and German measles became "Liberty measles," sauerkraut, "Liberty cabbage" and hamburgers became "Salisbury steaks." The United States textbooks, particularly those for grade eleven, did an excellent job generally in describing these events in some detail. The textbooks also provided numerous examples of anti-German slogans and posters for students to review as propaganda devices. After World War I, the textbooks ignored the role of propaganda and students may conclude

that propaganda was no longer a force in shaping American public opinion after that point in history.

The world geography textbooks generally failed to mention propaganda with the exception of three books that described propaganda as an art mastered and used by Communist nations, particularly the U.S.S.R., Cuba and China. Little attention was given to any other nations using propaganda.

The nine world history textbooks gave some limited attention to propaganda, but did much less than the United States history books. A few world history books mentioned propaganda being used in World War I and as a factor in the Cold War but by far the greatest coverage was given Nazi Germany with some on Fascist Italy. Several textbooks described Hitler's "Big Lie" approach and included Joseph Goebbels in two of the books. Unlike the United States history textbooks, little was provided in the way of sources for students to examine for propaganda techniques. This lack could be attributed to the space limitations facing the world history textbook authors.

The United States government textbooks were probably the most disappointing because of their failure to treat propaganda. Only two of the nine really gave much coverage to the role of mass media in shaping public opinion and even those did little related to foreign affairs. One textbook did provide coverage on the role of propaganda in totalitarian societies but did not point out that propaganda was also an instrument of foreign policy in democratic nations as well.

Overall the treatment of propaganda by the United States history textbooks was very good considering the influence of nationalism. Even here, the use of propaganda was ignored after World War I. The other textbooks gave only perfunctory attention to propaganda with a few exceptions. Now we will turn to another example in textbooks where nationalism appears to have had a powerful influence, United States/Latin American relations.

United States and Latin American Relations Given the recent turmoil in Central America and the hostility found in Latin America concerning the dominance by their "Big Brother" to the North, would space be given in textbooks to describe the relationships between the United States and the Latin American nations? Little could be discerned from most of the textbooks to expose the student to the tone of hostile feelings of many Latin Americans toward the policies of the United States government. Frances FitzGerald in her prize winning study of Vietnam culture, Fire in the Lake maintained that we failed in Vietnam because the United States leaders lacked understanding of the gulf between the cultures of the two.[12] With the exception of one textbook, little recognition was given to cultural characteristics of Latin America with the primary focus on political and military events.

The best job in overcoming nationalism were the accounts describing the acquisition of the Panama Canal. Several of the books included Theodore Roosevelt's statement, "I took the Canal Zone and let Congress debate." It is very clear in most of the texts that the United States engaged in doubtful activities to acquire the Canal.

Overall the textbooks did not do a very good job in their treatment of United States/Latin American relations but several were excellent on certain aspects and nearly all offered some criticism of United States policies at one point or another. The perspective of the Latin American countries was given little mention in most books and the cultures of the region were virtually ignored. The tone of most of the textbooks was generally bland and avoided controversy. The feeing of strong suspicion held by many Latin American people of United States policies did not emerge. Very little was done to describe United States economic interests in Latin America and what influence these interests have had on United States policies.

If the limitations of the textbooks concerning foreign relations between the United States and Latin America exist for other regions of the world, such as the Middle East, then students are receiving a very limited perspective of international relations. Let us now turn to how textbooks treat the policies and actions of the United States in a controversial event, the War in Vietnam.

The War in Vietnam in United States Textbooks Will United States history textbooks be able to describe with any objectivity the recent and tragic involvement in Vietnam? Vietnam remains a painful subject in the United States. It left a permanent scar on the American psyche and for many it was a bad dream that should be put out of mind. With such a setting, the historian has a difficult task to rise above his national environment. Frances FitzGerald in America Revised called the task a "nightmare for editors" in trying to produce a textbook. In her study of textbooks of the late 1960s and early 1970s, she declared the books to be "evasive" on the war and accused them of "floundering" in their discussions of Vietnam and American foreign policy. However a review of the books of the late 1970s found the picture of the war changing in some books.

Generally the ten textbook narratives tended to focus primarily upon the political and military aspects of the Vietnam conflict with only one providing any background to the Vietnamese cultural setting.

As a group, the books tended to neglect or to underplay the debate between "hawks" and "doves" over war aims and the various moral issues such as the My Lai massacre, the shooting at Kent State and chemical warfare, the physical and psychological costs of the war to America an Vietnam and the "lessons" to be learned from the war.

However one is pleasantly surprised by the general evenhandedness in the treatment of the topics covered. Few instances of either blatant or implied distortion or dishonesty were found. The textbooks neglected various moral issues but all the books did give some coverage to antiwar protests and most mentioned the Pentagon Papers. Still the books vary a great deal on some specific points. For example here are two different views of Ho Chi Minh:

> Ho Chi Minh was a dedicated Communist, trained in Soviet Russia and China.[14]

> Ho Chi Minh was an intelligent and resourceful Vietnamese patriot.[15]

One of the most influential events in the War was the Gulf of Tonkin incident which President Johnson used to justify an expansion of the War. Five of the textbooks were very open in implying that President Johnson provoked the attack as shown here:

> President Johnson said they were attacked without cause. (Later it appeared that they (the American destroyers) had been protecting South Vietnamese gunboats making raids on the enemy.[16]

Two of the ten books completely ignored the Gulf of Tonkin incident and three mentioned it without commenting as to whether or not the United States action was justified.

Concerning the My Lai massacre, only two discussed the event and four of the ten mentioned the shootings at Kent State. The antiwar movement was discussed in varying detail in all ten of the textbooks. Often vivid photographs of antiwar demonstrations accompanied the discussion.

The aims of the war in Vietnam were not clearly presented as well as the outcome and lessons of the war. One should not be surprised. Foreign policy experts still argue the validity of the domino theory, the moral and strategic complexities of the war, and the elusive "lessons" of the conflict. Most of the textbooks offered too sketchy an account of the Vietnam War but the deficiencies did not appear to be those of distortion or inaccuracy. Philip Knightley declared in his book, The First Casualty, that "the first casualty in a war is truth."[17] Yet at least half of the textbooks analyzed made some effort at obtaining some "truth" about Vietnam.

Let us now look at one more example of problems facing those who want the study of pervasive and enduring issues in the social studies curriculum.

Nuclear War in History Textbooks Probably no single issue troubles the mind of many concerned citizens in the modern western world more than the threat of a nuclear war. What coverage is provided by history textbooks on this important and controversial issue? To determine this, nineteen high school level world and United States textbooks were reviewed. Several key topics were focused upon including the creation of the atomic bomb, Hiroshima, and the arms race.

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was at least mentioned in all of the books, but usually in a very brief account as follows:

> On August 6, 1945, an American plane dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The bomb destroyed the city and killed more than 75,000 people.[18]

Most of the books provided little more than above and ignored after effects of the bomb including radiation. About one third of the books gave more coverage than others and most included pictures of either a mushroom cloud or a bombed out city. The United States history texts gave more attention to the dilemma of President Truman over the decision to drop the bomb or not. Six of the United States

history textbooks discussed the difficulties in creating the bomb while several of the world history books offered some information on the scientific aspects of the bomb. A few texts noted the moral dilemmas of scientists involved in creating the bomb and two discussed the J. Robert Oppenhemer case.

In general, the United States history textbooks gave slightly better coverage to arms limitation talks than did the world history texts but neither did much with this point. Four books gave fairly good accounts of the concepts of "massive retaliation" and "nuclear deterrents" but the rest ignored these ideas. Very little was done, except in three cases, with the "overkill" problem and the proliferation of weapons.

An interesting comparison can be made about content priorities for these history textbooks. Much greater coverage was given in nearly all of the United States history books to details of battles in the American Revolution and the Civil War than to all aspects of the nuclear arms race. In the world history books, one could find more space devoted to topics such as the Beatles and French impressionistic art than to nuclear war. The overall coverage of nuclear war was very slight with a few exceptions.

Summary The priorities of textbook content is a place to work on improving the social studies curriculum related to the study of peace and security issues. The secondary social studies textbooks reviewed in these studies found both strengths and weaknesses in coverage as would be expected. Social studies educators in all nations need to examine the treatment of peace and security issues in their own nation's textbooks to determine what impact nationalism has had on their books. Certainly, democratic nations should not be afraid to have their teachers deal with controversial issues in the classroom, if done in a fair and impartial setting.

Merely improving the content coverage of textbooks is just one of a number of measures that are needed to achieve the goals stated earlier in the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines. Inservice meetings to define where and how issues should be presented are necessary. Making better use of the news media available to students and teachers is also an important component. Involving parents in establishing priorities for the study of peace and security issues may help overcome concern over the study of controversial topics such as nuclear war. Meetings with educators from various nations to exchange ideas such as we are doing here are valuable experiences. Time does not permit me to explore these ideas further, but I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you here in Irsee and I hope we are opening doors for more communication in the future.

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